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ABSTRACT

Project REAL (Relationship skills, Education on violence prevention, Academics, Leadership and decision-making skills) was a practicum designed to increase the academic achievement of middle school students exposed to domestic violence. Eleven students and their parents participated in a 12-week interpersonal-cognitive counseling group and its parent education component. Project REAL provided students with: (1) instruction on stress management, conflict resolution, communication, study, and decision-making skills; (2) art therapy; and (3) guest speakers from community agencies that provide direct services to victims of domestic violence. Parents were counseled individually and received a resource guide on the services available to victims of domestic violence. The results of the practicum indicated that middle school students exposed to domestic violence need more than a 12-week group counseling program to increase their academic achievement. Although student academic performance did not increase significantly, parents did gain a better understanding of the effects of domestic violence on their children and on the resources available to overcome domestic violence. (Four appendixes contain copies of a project evaluation survey, student pre- and posttests, a parent interview form, and permission to use references. Contains 38 references.) (MDM)

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ED 373 865

Increasing the Academic Achievement of Middle School Students Exposed to Domestic Violence Through Interpersonal-Cognitive Group Counseling and Parenting Education (Project REAL)

by

Deborah Foreman

Cluster 51

A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed.D Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

1994

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

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This practicum report was submitted by Deborah Foreman under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

May 4, 1994
Date of Final Approval of Report

Mary Ellen Sapp
Mary Ellen Sapp, Ph.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Increasing the Academic Achievement of Middle School Students Exposed to Domestic Violence (Project REAL). Foreman, Deborah S., 1994: Practicum I Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Interpersonal-Cognitive Group Counseling/Middle School Education/Stress Management/Violence Prevention/ Conflict Resolution/Study Skills/Parent Education.

Project REAL (Relationship skills, Education on violence prevention, Academics, Leadership and decision-making skills), is a practicum that was designed to increase the academic achievement of middle school students exposed to domestic violence through a 12 week interpersonal-cognitive counseling group which included an education component for the parents of the middle school group participants.

The writer developed and administered a pre- and posttest to all middle school group participants and a post interview survey to each parent; reviewed the group participants' report cards before and after implementation; coordinated guest speakers from community agencies to facilitate sessions on violence prevention; and arranged for the middle school reading specialist to present study skills' strategies. A resource guide was developed and a folder of materials was distributed to the middle school parents; and, a Peace Fest (a parent and child fun day) was organized for parents and students.

The outcome from the practicum revealed that middle school students need more than the 12-week group counseling to increase their academic achievement. The data from the practicum also revealed that parents: (a) gained education on the negative effect domestic violence has on their children, (b) received information on community services that help alleviate stress, and (c) gained strategies on ways to cope with stress and conflict in a nonviolent way.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The middle school is a part of a public school system located in a county that is a suburb of a large metropolitan city. The area of the county is approximately 399 square miles. The county population is estimated to be 842,700. In addition, this county is composed of families who are employed in the government, military, and private businesses. Current demographics indicate that the ethnic population consists of predominantly middle class White families that are rapidly becoming more diverse. Demographers project that the minority population will rise to 43% by the year 2000.

The school system is divided into four geographical areas. The projected enrollment for the 1992-1993 school year was 135,912. There is a total of 213 schools and centers. The school system is well known for academic excellence and unique education programs for children who have special needs. The middle school is in a community

composed of students from highly diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The population of the middle school consisted of approximately 810 ethnically diverse sixth, seventh, and eight graders. The student enrollment for the 1992-1993 school year included 413 Whites, 137 Blacks, 93 Hispanics, 1 American Indian, and 156 Asians. In addition to special programs for identified underachievers, the middle school serves learning disabled, physically handicapped, and English-as-a second language students. Each student is assigned to a team of teachers.

The middle school has a student services staff that consists of one guidance director, three counselors, one part-time school social worker, and one part-time school psychologist. The writer has been employed as a social worker for 17 years. This social worker has worked in schools for 9 years.

In addition to serving the middle school, the writer is also assigned to three elementary schools. The writer's primary responsibility as a school social worker includes serving as a link between students' homes and the community. Many school systems hired social workers as a result of the special education law, Public Law 94-142. School social workers prepare comprehensive assessments of

the child's family's developmental and social history as part of the required multidisciplinary evaluation.

Other duties include providing support to families in all aspects of service delivery, advocating family rights and access to community services that are culturally sensitive and responsive to the diversity of family needs. Further, school social workers serve as case managers when appropriate and facilitate the creation and development of needed services, and effect mechanisms for coordinating services.

School social workers also are instrumental in guiding families to utilize available supports, including extended family members, community groups, friends, churches, public agencies and programs. The writer helps other professionals to comprehend the psychosocial and cultural experience of the family and community. Other important tasks of school social workers are assessing the family's ability and willingness to provide and manage basic nurturing needs such as food, shelter, protection, medical care, and employment. An added responsibility of many school social workers is to provide staff development and inservice training on topics such as family dynamics, crisis intervention, cultural diversity and community resources.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF PROBLEM

Problem Description

The writer found that 12 middle school students who were exposed to domestic violence exhibited poor academic performance in school. During the past two years, middle school counselors and teachers referred many students who exhibited poor academic performance. Many of these students were exposed to domestic violence or spousal abuse. In the 1992/1993 school year, 20 out of 55 students experienced violence in their households. The most reported types of domestic violence in the homes of middle school students were physical and/or emotional abuse that occurred between two adults. The parents and middle school students spoke candidly about this problem.

Moreover, many students who witnessed spousal violence at home also had problems with (a) peer relationships, (b) self-destructive behavior (suicidal ideation), (c) assignment completion, and (d) academic performance. Academically, many of these students received a grade of "D" or "F" on their progress reports. Yet, previous progress

reports completed by their elementary schools indicate these middle school students are capable of achieving at a much higher level. In addition, there are no programs that effectively address the possible negative impact that domestic violence may have on students' academic performance in the middle school. The middle school features and sponsors groups for (a) children of alcoholics, (b) children who lack social skills, and (c) children who are learning disabled. Support seldom exists for children who are victims of family violence. This support or intervention for middle school students is essential.

There appears to be insufficient support for parents and students to address the impact of domestic violence on the family. Most of the support, for students and parents who have no skills to deal with conflict in a nonviolent way, is focused on parenting skills programs and developmental group guidance programs. Neither of these programs provides support for victims of domestic violence. Therefore, many middle school students exposed to domestic violence exhibit poor academic performance in school.

Problem Documentation

Twenty of 55 students referred to the writer during the fall of 1992 because of poor academic performance were students who were exposed to violence between adults in their homes. The report cards for 12 of the 20 students showed a "D" or "F" in a minimum of one subject. Twelve

sociocultural evaluations or family assessment interviews were conducted with the parents of the 12 students who were referred. In examining the written documentation compiled from these family assessment interviews, the writer concluded that all 12 students met the criteria of being victims of domestic violence. The definition of domestic violence as recognized by the writer is "an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of physically hurting another person. This violence refers to the classic forms of violence towards wives, children, sibling violence, and violence towards parents. Finally, violence can occur between those who share a domestic relationship by virtue or sharing the same household" (Gelles, 1990, p. 22).

Both parents and students reported in their interviews that they were without nonviolent techniques for coping with stress and violence. Twelve parents recounted in their individual interviews that they were unaware of the impact of violence on children's academic performance.

The writer coordinated a domestic violence seminar for middle school staff in the fall of 1992. A survey (see Appendix A) was administered to the participants. Twenty-five of the 30 staff members who attended a domestic violence prevention seminar indicated on a survey that they perceived a need for counseling services in the school for students experiencing problems due to domestic violence in their homes.

Causative Analysis

The literature on domestic violence revealed several factors that contribute to the cause of domestic violence in the homes of middle school students. First, stressors in the home such as drug abuse, financial problems, or illness were a major contributor to violence in the homes of middle school students. Second, parents of middle school students appear to lack resources and support options. Third, parents or caretakers of middle school children were unaware of how violence can influence the academic performance of their child. Another contributor is the media and other elements of society that promote violence as acceptable. A fifth contributor to domestic violence in the homes of middle school students is parents' lack of participation in activities that support violence prevention. Finally, middle school students have fewer skills than adults to cope with stress and violence in their homes. Consequently, many of the middle school students who were victims or witnesses experience poor academic achievement in school because of anxiety or concern for a family member who is being abused.

Many middle school students were extremely concerned about how they would be affected as a result of stressors such as drug abuse, financial difficulties, or illnesses among adults in their homes. Most of the middle school students were also aware that these stressors can generate violent reactions. For example, one middle school student

had recently moved from his grandmother's home to reunite with his mother. His mother is addicted to cocaine and had not been capable of caring for him and his siblings in the past. Although his mother is currently stable, the student remembered the earlier violent fights that had ensued between his mother and father. The student's father continually moved in and out of the home. His father has difficulty maintaining a job; consequently, the family uses public assistance to provide for the student and his three siblings. A recent interview with his mother revealed that she was upset and concerned about the electricity being turned off for lack of money to pay the latest bill. The student reported additional violent incidents that had occurred between the parents. He occasionally requested help from the writer for himself and his family.

Another factor which contributes to domestic violence in the homes of middle school students is the parent's lack of awareness of community resources and support options. Many parents were unaware of help in the community such as (a) Alcohol and Narcotics Anonymous, (b) human resources, (c) self-help groups for men who batter, and (d) victim's assistance services for battered women.

Parents or caretakers of middle school children were unaware of how violence can influence the academic performance of their child. Additionally, parents lack the necessary skills to deal with conflict appropriately. Many

parents use physical force to resolve conflicts. Most of these parents were child victims of domestic violence. They witnessed conflicts being resolved by adults who used physical force in their homes. As such, these parents now repeat the cycle of violence they experienced. Furthermore, most of these physically violent parents did not realize the intellectual consequences for middle school-aged students who witness family violence. For most middle school students, the psychological impact of domestic violence interferes with their learning in the classroom. Students who were victims of domestic violence displayed failing grades in at least one subject, despite earlier report cards that confirm they were capable of much higher academic performance.

The media and other elements of society frequently promote the message that violence is acceptable. Most television shows and movies include violence as part of the plot, despite parental pleas to reduce violent content on television shows and in movies. Hechinger (1992) indicates the following:

> From an early age, children are conditioned to condone, and even admire, violence. Many cartoons aimed at very young children show violent action as a form of fun and amusement, with the implication that violence does not hurt. As children grow into adolescents, the violent content of TV intensifies, as does the time spent watching it. By the time they graduate from high school, many will have watched television for 22,000 hours, having been exposed to

> 18,000 televised murders and 800 suicides. (p. 14)

Moreover, an average of 80.3% of all television programs contains violent acts (Hechinger, 1992).

Society in general communicates mixed messages about the use of physical force. Sometimes physical force is acceptable; in other cases it is not. Middle school students and their parents often witness the military and police using direct acceptable physical force toward others. Recently, there have been many cases where the use of physical force was determined to be excessive and often viewed as brutality. The Rodney King case was an excellent example of police using excessive force while arresting a person. The impact of this case precipitated violence that caused the destruction of major areas of the city of Los Angeles and caused angry feelings among students in the middle school.

Nevertheless, it was also found that parents of middle school students do not engage in activities or programs that support violence prevention. Most parents who engage in physical violence were not involved in activities that promote nonviolence in relationships. The middle school parents did not know these programs existed.

Lastly, middle school students have fewer skills than adults to cope with stress and violence in their homes. No programs available to students address the stress of witnessing violence in the home. Many middle school

students receive no support to help them cope with problems they experienced as a result of the violence occurring between adults and others in their homes. Most of these students were having difficulty academically.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Domestic violence in the homes of middle school children is a prevalent phenomenon. In this practicum, domestic violence is defined as "abuse in a family or household and includes woman or spouse abuse, child incest, sibling abuse, and elderly abuse" (Levy, 1984, p. 23). Rose, Peabody, and Stratigeas (1991) state that the "reports of domestic violence, child abuse, incest, and other sexual and physical abuse of children and adults has increased explosively in the past 10 years" (p. 408). Straus (1977) concluded that marital physical violence occurs in 60 to 70% of all married couples. Solomon (1992) reported that each year 3.3 million children witness violence between adults at home. It is believed that the large number of domestic violence victims in the middle school closely reflects the number of cases reported nationwide.

According to Osofsky (1991), children experiencing severe trauma caused by violence lose interest in the world and try to avoid anything that triggers the situation. These children display feelings of estrangement, constriction in affect and cognition, memory impairment, phobias, and impairment in performing daily activities.

However, most of the adults are unaware of the psychological effects that witnessing violence in the home has on children. Hotaling, Straus and Lincoln (1990) postulated that the "learning theory approach to family violence contends that the family serves as a training ground for violence" (p. 441). These authors implied that children who witness domestic violence tend to emulate this behavior and are generally rewarded by persons they mimic for displaying this similar conduct. Parents reward these youth when they praise them for using this behavior to settle conflicts with others. Solomon (1992) pointed out that when children experience violence in their homes, it has a negative impact on self-esteem and behavior. Furthermore, Straus (1990) proposed that children who are victims of domestic violence experience learning problems and are most likely to become juvenile delinquents. While the literature confirms children are impacted by domestic violence, middle school parents remain unaware of the many ways it damages children's lives.

Carlson (1992) and Layzer, Goodson, and deLange (1986) have indicated that violence in the home can have a negative effect on a child's self esteem and physical well being. Layzer, Goodson, and deLange (1986) also noted that children exposed to violence show health and behavior problems which tend to surface as a result of violent surroundings. Moreover, Wildin, Williamson, and Wilson (1991) argued that

"spouse battering also contributes to homelessness which has been shown to significantly affect children's developmental behavior, and academic performance" (p. 29). In addition, a child's sense of security is interrupted when the battered parent has to seek shelters to escape violent behavior in their homes. In short, when children witness violence, the effects it leaves on these children are devastating because it interferes with their intellectual and emotional development.

Additionally, a study done by Wildin, Williamson, and Wilson (1991), which focused on the academic achievement of school-aged children who were victims of domestic violence, found that a "high rate (46%) of the parents reported academic problems, including grade repetition, failing grades, and a need for special school services" (p. 299). The Fantuzzo and Linquist (1989) study on children from violent homes revealed that children who were victims of violent homes appeared to have impaired concentration spans and difficulty with school work. Cohn and Johnson (1983), Straus and Gelles (1990), Turkel and Eth (1983), and Wolfe (1987) suggested children who witness domestic violence tend to experience stress-related problems. These authors also implied that a volatile outburst exhibited by adults in the home is particularly more stressful than conflicts provoked by a child's actions. Another study notes that children exposed to violence in the family have higher levels of

anxiety (Forsstrom-Cohen & Rosenbaum, 1985). The authors also indicate the anxiety that children experience from witnessing violence interferes with the learning process in school and often leads to poor academic performance. Middle school students who are exposed to domestic violence displayed many symptoms of stress. Academic difficulty, as a result of daydreaming and not completing school assignments in the classroom, is experienced by these students. Significant attention has been provided to children of divorced parents and children of alcoholics. Children of violent homes and children of divorce and alcoholism face similar complex family situations. Many mental health professionals have coined the phrase, "dysfunctional family." Accordingly, children from violent families should also be identified as having difficulties and emotional needs as a result of living in dysfunctional families. A critical need for children of violent homes may be for parents and educators to be aware of how violence affects both the academic ability and the behavior of children. However, there is little attention given in the middle school to victims of domestic violence, in spite of the fact that much of the literature justifies the need to support child victims of violence just as many schools do for victims of unforeseen catastrophes.

Most of the research typically examines the effects of domestic violence on children's behaviors. There has been

little effort to explore the effects of domestic violence on the academic achievement of the middle school student. Overall, the literature suggested that domestic violence is a global problem which not only impacts children but entire families. Many parents who engaged in violence were not cognizant of the effects the violence has on their children. Parents have no idea that when children witness repeated acts of violence, they are most likely to suffer post-traumatic stress disorder, a condition recognized in war participants and others, a condition traditionally known as "shellshock" (Timick, 1989). According to Timick (1989) "post-traumatic stress syndrome disorder reduces the ability to concentrate and remember, resulting in poor school performance" (p. 10). Therefore, school-age children who witness domestic violence may suffer from anxiety and physical ailments. Unfortunately, these ailments interfere with their succeeding in the classroom.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

Improving the academic performance of middle school students exposed to domestic violence was the anticipated goal.

Expected Outcomes

At the end of the implementation, three changes are expected. The following outcomes were projected for this practicum.

Outcome 1: Seven of 12 middle school students who participate in the practicum will earn a grade of "C" in all subjects as measured by the student's quarterly report card.

Outcome 2: All 12 students who participate in the practicum will be able to manage stress and will gain nonviolent skills to deal with conflict as measured by the posttest (see Appendix B).

Outcome 3: All 12 parents who participate in the practicum (a) will be aware that domestic violence has a negative impact on children's academic performance, (b) will have strategies to cope with stress and conflict in a

nonviolent way, and (c) will receive information on community services to help alleviate stress in the home as measured by the post interview with parent (see Appendix C).

Measurement of Outcomes

Measurement of Outcome 1: Seven of the 12 middle school students who complete group counseling will earn a grade of "C" in all subjects on their quarterly report cards. The report card was selected because it would provide data on the students' academic progress before and after the implementation. Teacher narratives about each group member will provide feedback on group members' academic performance between grading periods.

Measurement of Outcome 2: Twelve students will be able to manage stress and gain nonviolent skills. A pre- and posttest (see Appendix B) consisting of 10 statements which focus on academic performance, violence in the home, stress management, and violence prevention skills, will be administered. A comparison between the pre- and posttest-scores for items 6 and 10 will determine if students state that they are able to manage stress and if they state they have gained nonviolent skills. The group members will choose from three responses (true, false, or unsure).

Measurement of Outcome 3: All 12 parents (a) will be aware that domestic violence has a negative impact on children's academic performance, (b) will have strategies to cope with stress and conflict in a nonviolent way, and (c)

will have information on community services to help alleviate stress. A post-interview (see Appendix C) will be held with each parent of the students who participate in the practicum. The post-interview is composed of five questions. The items focus on the (a) academic performance of middle school students, (b) stress management, and (c) positive ways to deal with conflict. Responses to post-interview item number 1 (Physical violence between family or household members in the home can influence children's performance in a negative way), number 3 (I have received a resource guide of human agencies in my community), and item number 4 (I am aware of ways to deal with stress without using physical force) will be reviewed to determine whether this outcome was met. If all parents answer "yes" to these questions, then this outcome will have been met.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Middle school students who were exposed to domestic violence were exhibiting poor academic performance in school. These students had not received emotional support in the school setting. The parents or caretakers of these middle school students were not aware that violence in the home was influencing their child's academic performance in a negative way. Consequently, there were no interventions in place in the middle school for students or their parents to address domestic violence in the home.

Much of the literature supported the need for prevention programs that addressed the cycle of violence in families. For instance, Straus and Gelles (1990) reported that preventive programs not only decrease the expenses incurred due to violence but they lower the numbers of lives that are impacted because of domestic violence. Gelles and Cornell (1990) indicated that "treatment is necessary to protect the lives and welfare of the victims of family violence" (p. 138). The impact on these victims,

particularly, school-age children, is enormous. Doherty (1989) reported that children exposed to the severe battering of a parent suffer severe emotional and learning problems, including depression, short attention spans, violent behavior, nightmares and memory loss. This author submits that counseling or group therapy which focuses on feelings and how to cope with loss is one way to heal youngsters and prevent the emotional damage that can impact their emotional behavior throughout adulthood. Likewise, Kimball (1986) also submitted one solution in working with youth from violent environments was group counseling. According to this author, "Group cohesion results in an atmosphere that promotes honest emotional expression and sharing" (p. 29). Kimball promotes bringing adolescents together for a wilderness retreat to address daily the abusive home situations of the participants and to teach them coping strategies.

Lane (1989) found group counseling beneficial for children in need of emotional support regarding family issues. The author also contended that group counseling is an excellent way to build self esteem in youth through activities such as circle games and positive role plays. The interpersonal-cognitive group examines problems and finding ways to address them in a positive way (Elias and Clabby, 1992). Spivack and Shure (1974) note interpersonal-cognitive problem-solving groups illustrate a

focus on creating answers to a problem by (a) brainstorming, (b) analyzing carefully, and (c) developing a plan.

Another solution (Schultz and Heuchert, 1983) for working with students exposed to domestic violence involved teaching children strategies to manage stress in an adaptive manner. These authors highly encouraged children who experience stress caused by abuse of any kind to be taught "stress management skills" (p. 141). Schultz and Heuchert (1983) found that activities such as teaching students to count to 10 before reacting in a stressful situation, reading a book and exercising are helpful stress reducers. Wohl and Kaufman's (1985) work revealed another solution. They found that art therapy provides a youngster with the opportunity to share emotional feelings or to release stress due to domestic violence through drawing. A grief group for children who were victims in Los Angeles, California utilized activities such as an expression mirror and feeling hearts as a way to help them deal with their emotions (Timick, 1989).

Levy (1984) advised that middle school children should receive education on "what battering is, how and why it happens, and how to keep relationships free from ever being abusive" (p. 9). This author offered a model for teaching students violence-free skills which included communication skills, problem-solving, decision-making, and conflict resolution skills. Wampler and Hess (1992) promoted having

middle school students discuss and practice conflict resolution styles. The authors feel by presenting and explaining options other than violence would not only teach conflict resolution skills to students but would also help them to reduce their own tension and stress.

Gleason, Colvin, and Archer (1991) reported that students who experience academic difficulty could improve if their study habits were enhanced. They advise that these students receive information on "successful study strategies" (p. 137).

The National Association of Secondary Principals (1993) recommended students attend a discussion on study skills that include the following topics: (a) helping students to determine their learning style, (b) discussing creative problem-solving, (c) listening effectively, and (d) learning to set goals.

Many experts contended that in order to address the impact of domestic violence on children, parents must also receive help. The literature (Tower, 1984; Marston, 1990; Kersey, 1988; Kuczen, 1987; Helmstetter, 1989) suggest many ideas on how to assist parents who engage in violent behavior. Gelles and Cornell (1990) said that "treatment is necessary to protect the lives and welfare of the victims of family violence" (p. 138). Armstrong (1986) also suggested that parents need to be educated about the negative influence violence has on children.

Tower (1984) recommended that parents who engage in violence receive education that focuses on positive ways to discipline children. He also felt parents needed to participate in courses on child development. Tower (1984) noted that parents are not aware of what a child may or may not be capable of mastering, and, thus, this lack of information interferes with the child's ability to function in all areas, including academics. Gelles and Cornell (1990) promoted solutions such as teaching parents to utilize alternative discipline strategies rather than physical punishment as a step toward breaking the cycle of violence. They also suggested that to adequately focus on domestic violence, issues like poverty, inequality, and unemployment will need to be examined. Lastly, Tower (1984) offers the solution that educators and other school personnel should know the phone numbers of referral sources and should provide this information to all parents, especially those known and/or suspected to be involved in domestic violence.

In short, the most recommended solutions for addressing the poor achievement of middle school students exposed to domestic violence were group counseling and parent education. It was determined that middle school students and parents need to be taught ways of addressing conflicts without violence and need to know stress management skills such as using art therapy or counting to 10 before

responding to a stressful situation. In addition, it was found that middle school students could also benefit from study skills for the purpose of improving their academic achievement.

Description of Selected Solution

Experts on domestic violence and its impact on youth suggested many solutions to the problem; nevertheless, it was important to evaluate, critique, and determine the most appropriate solutions for the middle school setting.

Middle school students tend to deal better with traumatic issues when they are engaged in a group with peers who are experiencing similar problems (Kimball, 1986). The solutions of teaching stress management skills, conflict resolution, violence-free skills, communication skills, decision-making, and of providing art therapy to middle school students who were exposed to domestic violence seemed to be most practical for this writer. These solutions seemed to be feasible and could be implemented during the 12 weeks of the practicum. The writer will be the leader of the group. Guest speakers from community agencies that provide direct services to victims of domestic violence will serve as facilitators. A guidance counselor will provide study skill strategies to the middle school students.

The solution strategies will be presented in different sessions of group counseling. The interpersonal-cognitive

group counseling for middle school students experiencing stress as a result of domestic violence will meet weekly.

The writer will offer two sessions of parenting education for parents. Included will be information about (a) discipline, (b) violence prevention, and (c) child development. The writer will present information about the effect of violence on children.

One group session will be provided to the parents of the middle school group members. The second meeting will feature group members and students. This session will be scheduled after school during the last week of implementation. Home visits will be made to those parents who are unable to make the scheduled parent group meetings.

Report of Action Taken

The writer followed the 12-week plan as presented under the Description section. Changes in the practicum were as followed. The practicum was named Project REAL which is an acronym for Relationship skills, Education on violence prevention, Academics, and Leadership and decision-making skills. The acronym was developed after the writer realized that middle school students needed a way to identify the group from other activities being offered in the middle school. The writer believed that this solution would be the most effective one for helping middle school students to deal with stress from being exposed to violence. It was felt that middle school students working together in a group

to talk about feelings and concerns would be beneficial. Additionally, Elias and Clabby's (1992) work suggested that middle school students need to be provided a means of obtaining problem-solving skills, such as conflict resolution and stress management skills, to prepare them for interpersonal relationships in the future. It was also hoped that parents receiving information on how domestic violence effects children would improve the academic achievement of the group members. The middle school students were interviewed and given parent permission forms. Students returned the forms with their parent's signature. Thirteen permission forms were received by the writer, however, only 11 actually attended the initial group meetings. Therefore, the writer began working with the 11 students who brought the permission slips.

Evidence that Project REAL fulfilled the goals and outcomes of the practicum was to be determined when group members achieved a "C" or better in all subjects. The interpersonal-cognitive group was comprised of middle school students who had experienced a volatile separation and divorce and/or violence between adult members in their families. The education component was comprised of: (a) stress management strategies, (b) violence prevention skills, and (c) study skills for students. The sessions were to held for 1 hour a week. In addition, the writer presented education on the effects of domestic violence on

children who witness it, stress management, ways to deal with conflicts nonviolently, and community resources to address stressors in the home where violence occurs. The writer and a social work intern led the group and parent sessions which was also different for the initial plan.

Parent Sessions

The parent education focused on solving conflicts without violence in the home and effective discipline without violence for middle school students. The writer met with parents individually due to the cancellation of the scheduled guest speaker and because many of the parents had problems arranging their work schedules.

Six of the conferences were held at the middle school and five were held in the parents' homes. The first conference session with parents was held during the second week of implementation and the last one was completed by the third week. A discussion on ways to manage stress was presented in this session. Parents were encouraged to discuss what they feel causes stress in their homes and to examine ideas on how they can prevent this stress from happening.

One parent talked about her concerns about her estranged husband. The parent indicated that her husband moves in and out of her home. This mother seemed very concerned about her husband's volatile behavior and the impact it was having on her adolescent children. The parent

stated she was afraid that her oldest son was beginning to model her husband's behavior. The writer explained the types of skills that were being taught to her son. She was given referrals to community resources and encouraged to utilize them. The mother was also encouraged to reinforce the skills her son was learning on nonviolence at home. The writer took the opportunity to refer her for victim assistance counseling. The writer also offered to talk with her husband about a men's support group. This parent indicated that she would inform him about the group.

The writer gave each parent a folder which included a list of community resources, a newsletter from the state domestic violence coalition, and brochures concerning how domestic violence effects children. The middle school provided the folders for the parents. The primary purpose of this activity was to educate parents about human resources in the community and on how they can cope and prevent stress.

Meeting with parents individually gave the chance to be supportive and discuss their situations more openly. Many of these parents admitted they had difficulty trusting others because they had never experienced a nurturing relationship. These parents were not ready to discuss or hear information on domestic violence in a group setting because society has deemed this issue as taboo for so long. Therefore, the writer felt parents were resistant to

arranging their schedules for group meetings as an indication that a group discussion on this subject would be uncomfortable for most of these parents.

An individual session seemed more acceptable to the parents who might have been too weak or threatened to face their own problems. The writer discovered, as a result of the individuals conferences, that 10 out of the 11 parents revealed in the individual sessions that, like their children, they had been a child victim of family violence.

Student Sessions

Week 1

This session focused on (a) introducing group members, (b) establishing rapport, (c) getting group members input, and (d) discussing the group rules and the purpose of the group. Each student was also given a folder of material needed for the group sessions. The folder had a calendar diary and activity diary inside of it.

The intern led the group members in two get-acquainted activities. One of the activities was called name game and the other was a circle game. These activities helped the new group members to learn the names and something about other group members. The group members were invited to talk about any concerns they had regarding their families. Several of the group members were reluctant to talk about their private situations in front of the group in this meeting. They hurriedly said one or two things about their

home situations. In spite of the various group work techniques used by the writer to encourage the group members to talk, the group members resisted the opportunity to elaborate on their comments. The writer did not feel uncomfortable regarding the group members reactions because it was determined they presented typical adolescent behavior. Also, it is not unusual for group participants to be unwilling to disclose too much information in the beginning phase of groups.

The group members also signed contracts that indicated the subject they would like to improve by the next grading period. The signing of the contract provoked a lot of discussion. Some group members did not know which subject they wanted to improve. After some discussion with other group members, each of them made a decision and signed the contract.

Week 2

This session focused on building trust and identifying feelings. During this meeting, the group members talked openly about their family situations. One student discussed his current placement in foster care and his parents struggles with substance abuse.

The writer also distributed a calendar diary to each student for the purpose of writing down their feelings. The students were excited about having their own personal diary. The calendar diaries were obtained from an organization that

promotes world peace. The calendar diary includes a thought provoking quote or a suggestion for an activity to promote peace. It also provided suggestions for improving your effectiveness as a peacemaker.

Other activities presented to students were (a) the "My character sheet," (b) the appearance mirror activity, and (c) the perceptive messages/perceptive souls" sheet. They were a tremendous help in discussing and identifying feelings. Many of the group members were taught that it is not appropriate to show or discuss feelings in their families. Therefore, they did not have the opportunity to show or discuss their feelings at home. Yet, the above activities gave the group members permission to ventilate their feelings and concerns about the violence in their lives.

Week 3

This session focused on defining verbal and physical violence (Levy, 1984). Students were encouraged to write in their diaries any significant information they wanted to share. The primary purpose of the calendar diary was to help them to focus on writing down their feelings. The students were excited about having their own personal diaries. The writer was struck by how open and honest group members were in respect to the information they wrote in their diaries. One student vividly wrote about how he felt "dumb." He also described many other negative things he

felt about himself. This student generally displayed silly and clownish behavior in the classroom and in the group. The writer learned that this group member had received special education since he entered school. However, he was found ineligible this school year and was failing most of his core subjects. The writer immediately referred him to the child study committee for retesting. The student was found to be once again eligible for special education.

Students determined what they wanted to discuss in the third session. A 20-minute video (Elkind, Sweet, & Watson, 1992) was also shown to the group members. This video demonstrated how teens are confronted with physical abuse and how they handle the situation. This meeting was racilitated by a volunteer from a family service agency that provides counseling to victims of violence. The group members responded positively in the discussion. They seemed more willing to discuss verbal and physical violence as it applied in their homes. Some of the group members appeared very anxious during this session. There was frequent giggling and joking behavior. The students were uncooperative. When confronted about this, the group members did not seem to be able to explain their behavior. Only after the writer encouraged them to talk about it, it was discovered that many of them had been physically and verbally abused. The writer discovered that the members used this silly behavior to cover up for feelings of anger and pain.

Week 4

This session focused on decision-making and abuse prevention. Group members also participated in an art therapy activity. They were asked to draw a picture of the most peaceful time in their lives and an unpeaceful situation. The art work was arranged in a collage. Group members were asked to use their decision-making skills to decide where to display the collage. The writer had not planned on where to display the collage. After a short discussion, the group members decided to display the collage in the middle school's showcase which is located in the school's main hall. The decision to place the collage in the hall was a major task which was accomplished by the group. The writer was extremely excited to see their group processing skills result in a positive decision. After the decision had been made to put it in the school's hallway, several of the group members asked to take their artwork home so they could refine them. Permission was requested and granted from the principal to display the art work in the hallway. The writer placed a special emphasis on peaceful situations and suggested that the artwork be displayed during the winter holiday. The theme for the collage was "World Peace Begins in Homes." The writer received positive feedback from staff members regarding the art project. Pictures where taken of the collage while it was displayed in the school's showcase.

Week 5

This session focused on why people choose to be violent versus nonviolent (Levy, 1984). The group leader invited a guest speaker to facilitate this group meeting. The speaker was introduced and the topic of the discussion was presented. The group leader had the group members break out into small groups to brainstorm reasons why people choose violence over nonviolence. The members were given 15 minutes to brainstorm. The group members chose a recorder and a reporter. The members returned to the large group and suggested some reasons why people tend to choose violence over nonviolence. The writer discussed issues such as (a) homelessness, (b) unemployment, and (c) mental health.

Students were asked to participate in two role plays. One role play involved a female confronted with a physically abusive situation. The second role play involved a male having trouble controlling his anger. Students talked to the person sitting next to them for five minutes. The issue of anger control was discussed in the large group. The group leader highlighted the fact that men can also be victims of abusive situations. The group members did very well with these role plays. Some of the group members got more involved than others. For example, one male and one female did a role play regarding a male controlling his behavior. The group members played the role so well it seem

like they both had experienced the situation prior to the role play.

The facilitator of this group had the group members present their views regarding the role plays in the large group. The writer observed anxious behavior in the group members again. The writer felt that the topic, in addition to their trust level, was a factor in them becoming anxious. The group was confronted about their behavior. Many of them spoke freely about their being physically and verbally disciplined. They went on to say that they felt they had been abused. Interesting enough, many of them said they would rather be physically punished than to have a parent scream at them.

Week 6

This session focused on providing information to the students about what is meant by the cycle of violence. The group leader showed and explained a diagram demonstrating the cycle of violence to the group. The writer asked the group members to recall what happens before a person gets angry enough to hurt someone. A group member volunteered to write the members' ideas on a large sheet of paper. The following was listed: (a) an argument begins, (b) someone gets upset or loses control, (c) physical hitting may occur, and (d) person calms down and apologizes.

The writer also felt it was important to discuss substance abuse and how this issue may contribute to

violence in families because many of the group members had family members addicted to alcohol and drugs. The words alcoholism, addiction, and chemical dependency were defined. The group also discussed why they think people use drugs. The group leader pointed out to the group that many people use drugs to avoid their problems. The writer emphasized the fact that if people don't learn to cope with their problems, they will continue to run away to escape problems. The group members later discussed the questions as planned. The group members then returned to the large group. The members discussed the responses in the large group. The members of the group had some interesting things to say about what generates violence in society. A group member volunteered to record their ideas on a large sheet of paper. They felt drugs, gangs, weapons, television and music contributed to violence in society.

The group had a discussion about the second question: "Why members in families hurt the ones they love?" The primary response was that people hurt members of their families because they have not learned to express angry feelings in any other way. The writer had them discuss their viewpoint. One member of the group felt that people hurt the ones they love because they have been hurt and they feel this the best way to respond. The writer told the group that they had all had good responses; some people hurt the ones they love (Levy, 1984). People tend to respond the way they

are taught in their families or the way they see people they respect behave. The writer emphasized that the purpose of this group is to find less hurtful ways to respond to people we love. The writer did not distribute teacher narrative forms to the teachers of the group members as planned because after consulting with the middle school's guidance director, it was felt that the report card data would be sufficient to determine the outcome for this practicum.

Week 7

This session focused on how violent reactions can be prevented if people are able to define roles in relationships (Levy, 1984). The writer discussed some reasons why people tend to dominate others. Students shared some of their experiences regarding how people behave according to what others expect of them. Students also discussed whether expectations of how one behaves differ according to a person's culture. Group members reviewed a video tape on how to deal with conflicts in school. Each of the group members had some interesting opinions on the topic of discussion.

Issues such as gender bias and other forms of discrimination, and poor self-esteem were mentioned by the participants as they felt it related to why people dominate others. The meaning of jealousy and how that relates to violent behavior was also discussed. The group members presented many personal experiences with jealousy regarding

relatives in the home and their peers in school. One group member talked about her father being jealous of her mother and how she looked. The member felt her father was verbally abusive to her mother.

Another group member felt that a girl wanted to fight her because the girl's boyfriend liked her. The writer encouraged group members to be aware of jealousy and how this behavior causes conflicts and encourages domineering behavior.

Week 8

This session focused on the students learning conflict resolution skills. The group leader led a discussion on the positive and negative aspects of conflicts. The group members were asked to define conflict. They presented interesting feedback on what they considered to be the meaning of conflict. The writer discussed and defined conflict resolution styles and gave examples of each style (Wampler, 1992). The three styles discussed were: (a) confrontation, (b) denial and (c) problem-solving. The group was asked to talk about conflict resolution style. Many of them admitted that they tended to use physical means to deal with conflicts but would consider other nonviolent alternatives in the future. Some of the group members talked about the reality of not having enough time to use other means of dealing with conflict when they are attacked by someone else. The writer acknowledged this comment and

had the group to respond to what could be done when someone is placed in this situation.

Study skills were also discussed in this session. A middle school reading teacher facilitated the discussion. The principal of the school suggested that the new reading teacher facilitate the study skills group because of her experience in this area. Major topics of the study skills discussion included: (a) helping students to take adequate notes, (b) improving their grades, (c) hearing the important facts, and (d) learning how to reach their dream. The reading teacher also presented a video on how to take adequate notes and did a great job on highlighting the major points from the video. The group members' response to the video was mixed. They felt the actors on the video were "boring" but they found the information was helpful. The writer was not surprised by the reaction that the group members felt the actors were "boring"; in fact, this response is generally typical for the age group.

Week 9

This session focused on stress management and coping techniques. The group members participated in art therapy. They drew a picture of the happiest time in their life. The group participants discussed the picture and explained why it was a good time for them. The participants wrote down several positive things they enjoy doing. This activity helped them to understand that they can replace the

stress they feel by doing something positive in their lives. The writer also participated in this activity and found it extremely beneficial in reducing stress. The group also talked about other ways to address stress. The list included ideas such as: (a) listen to nonviolent music, (b) count to 10 before you react in a stressful situation, (c) read a book, (d) ride a bicycle, (e) call a friend, (f) play a fun game, (g) go for a walk, (h) exercise, (i) learn to something new, and (j) meditate. The group members seemed to enjoy generating ways to cope with stress.

Week 10

This session focused on discussing ways of minimizing stress for parents and students. The writer coordinated a "Peacefest." The "Peacefest" activity was very exciting for the group members. As planned, the writer presented stress busters for parents and students. The writer was unable to get guest speakers to present information on good nutrition. However, the writer talked about the importance of exercise, dance and breathing techniques. Role play activities on conflict resolution were not done. Parents and group members participated in several fun activities. The writer gave prizes for Peace "Bingo" and musical chairs.

The writer invited a guest speaker from the local family services agency. The topic of this small group discussion was "How to Manage Your Middle School Child." The speaker discussed ways to discipline children without

physical punishment. The parents were provided with handouts on stress management and ways to deal with conflict without force. The parents and students told the writer that they had enjoyed this event. The group members felt the activity should be repeated.

Week 11

This session focused on a review of (a) domestic violence, (b) violence prevention, (c) stress management, and (d) study skills. The termination process began in this session. The group members discussed what changes had occurred in their homes since they started group counseling. They also talked about what they learned from being in the group. The group leader encouraged group members to use the skills they learned about how to communicate with others. The group members discussed their sad feelings about terminating from the group. Some anxious behavior was observed but was confronted and understood to be a normal response to separation and termination. The thought of the group ending also raised some discomfort for the writer. Much time, expense, and effort had gone into designing and implementing this practicum.

The writer recommended that many of the group members participate in other groups in the school and informed them of the groups that would be available to them in the school during the upcoming semester. Many of the members expressed an interest in continuing Project REAL.

Week 12

This session focused on ways to assist people who are victims of domestic violence. The writer facilitated a group discussion on instances when the group members might need information on helping peers or relatives to seek help from abusive situations. A referral list of agencies that offer telephone counseling and walk-in services to youth was distributed to the group members. Each group member was encouraged to keep the information in their folders until they needed to share it. Students were also given a holiday party. This event was a happy and sad event for both the group members and the leaders. The school provided the group with the pizza for this party. The group members were surprised when certificates of completion of the group were handed out to them. This idea was not a part of the original plan but it was felt that the group members learned many important skills. The certificates would help to reinforce these skills and reward them for their participation in the group. Pictures were taken as the writer and intern gave them the certificates. The group members thanked the writer and social work intern for working with them.

The writer also developed an evaluation sheet for the students. It was felt that the feedback would be helpful in planning for the next group. According to the evaluation completed by the group members, all of them felt the group

sessions were helpful. Also, all of them indicated that Project Real should be continued in the middle school. Ten out of 11 group members said that they would join another counseling group. As planned, the posttests were administered (see Appendix B) and student report cards were also reviewed to determine group members progress since the group began.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Many of the middle school students exposed to domestic violence exhibited poor academic performance in school. The goal of this practicum was to improve the middle school students' academic achievement.

Middle school students who were exposed to domestic violence at home also had problems with (a) peer relationships, (b) self-destructive behavior (suicidal ideation), (c) assignments completion and below-average performance in at least one subject. Most of these innocent victims of violence had one grade of "D" or "F" on their last grading report in spite of evidence in their school records that indicated they were capable of higher performance.

The solution strategy selected included a 12-week interpersonal-cognitive group for middle school students which featured two sessions for their parents. The following outcomes were projected:

Outcome 1: Seven middle school students will earn a grade of "C" in all subjects. This outcome was not met. An analysis of the report cards of the 11 participants who completed the group counseling indicated that four of the participants earned a grade of "C" in all subjects.

Outcome 2: All of the students will be able to manage stress and gain nonviolent skills to deal with conflict. This outcome was not met. An analysis of the questionnaire pre- and posttest completed by the 11 participants indicated that only 7 of the participants met this outcome (see Table 1).

Table 1. Pre- and Posttest Responses to Domestic Violence Prevention Questionnaire

		Pre-Test	Post-Test
Item	Response	n	n
6. I do not know how to cope with the fighting in my home.	True	2	2
	False	6	8
	Unsure	3	1
10. I am aware of ways to deal with stress in my home due to violence that occurs between adults in my home.	True	3	7
	False	3	2
	Unsure	5	0

Note. n = 11.

Outcome 3: Eleven parents (a) will be aware that domestic violence has a negative impact on children's academic performance, (b) will have strategies to cope with stress and conflict in a nonviolent way, and (c) will receive information on community services that can help

alleviate stress in home, was met (see Table 2). An analysis of the post interview with parents data indicated that eleven parents felt that all three components of outcome 3 were met.

Table 2. Post Interview with Parent Data

Item		Response	n
1. Physical violence between family or household members in the home can influence children's performance in a negative way.	1	Yes	11
	2	No	0
	3	Unsure	0
3. I have received a resource guide of human services agencies that are located in my community.	1	Yes	11
	2	No	0
	3	Unsure	0
4. I am aware of ways to deal with stress without using physical force.	1	Yes	11
	2	No	0
	3	Unsure	0

Note. n = 11.

Discussion

Based upon the most recent report cards of the middle school students who completed the interpersonal-cognitive group counseling, it was found that Outcome 1 (7 of the 12 students who completed group counseling would achieve all "C's) was not met. A possible explanation of this result is that the introduction of the study skills session was too late in the practicum. The writer would recommend moving the study skills to an earlier session and perhaps building on skills during the remaining sessions.

Another explanation could be that some of the middle school students come from such difficult family situations that a 12-week program could not possibly address all of their issues. Gelles and Cornell (1990) argue strongly that one program alone cannot break the cycle of violence that permeates society. They also feel that one intervention alone cannot address those factors which cause the acts of violence in the children's social milieu.

Many of the students who received group counseling faced issues such as unemployment, substance abuse and overcrowded housing. In spite of these social barriers, four of the students did achieve all "Cs" or better on their report card. Furthermore, the students' reports cards revealed that in the core subjects, such as English, math, and social studies, some middle school students' achievement did improve. For instance, one student improved in English, two students improved in math and two students improved in social studies. The report cards also indicated that three students' grades had declined in English and one student's grade had declined in social studies.

The writer also discovered that the failure of group members to complete their homework assignments, coupled with the fact that the study skills session was late in the 12 weeks of implementation, were two major factors which effected the outcome.

Outcome 2: All of the students would manage their stress and gain nonviolent skills, was not met when assessed with the outcome of the post data obtained from the domestic violence prevention questionnaire; however, when examined further, it was found that most of the middle school students were able to manage stress. Also, the writer learned that the majority of the group members had also gained nonviolent skills.

Kimball (1986), Lane (1989), Levy (1989) and Hechinger (1992) support the use of group counseling with children who have been exposed to traumatic events such as loss and violence. They agree that counseling alleviates the stress these youngsters may experience. Clearly, teaching these middle school youngsters stress management and nonviolent conflict resolution skills addressed the negative behavior they observed at home.

The art activities helped many of the students to relax and to create exceptional art work. Wohl and Kaufman (1985), Howard (1990), and Stronach-Buchel (1990) support the use of art therapy for victims of domestic violence. They confirm that art therapy provides children with the opportunity to work through their fearful feelings.

One unanticipated outcome was that 11 of the middle school students gained confidence in themselves. The writer observed that all of the middle school students' self-esteem increased after receiving group counseling and having their

artwork displayed in the school's showcase. Many of the students joined other activities. Two group members joined the after school weight-lifting group, 2 joined the drama club and the 4 joined the school's chorus.

Outcome 3: Eleven parents: (a) will be aware that domestic violence has a negative impact on children's academic performance, (b) will have strategies to cope with stress and conflict in a nonviolent way, and (c) will receive information on community services to help alleviate stress in the home, was met. One explanation as to why this outcome was met is that parents received education regarding the negative influence domestic violence has on children. Helmstetter (1989), Kuczen (1987), Marston (1990), and Tower (1984) assert that parents should receive help in learning ways to promote healthy development in children. They submit that this information results in positive interactions for parents with violent behavior.

According to Tower (1984), having school staff provide referral sources to parents who are suspected of being involved in domestic violence combats this issue. One step toward addressing the cycle of family violence is to teach alternative methods of discipline to parents who physically punish their children (Gelles & Cornell, 1990). The strategies described were utilized and found to be effective in meeting Outcome 3.

Finally, another unanticipated outcome was that the graduates of the Project REAL group will go on a field trip with the school's mentor program. The writer coordinated a trip for the school's mentor program and Project REAL group members to participate on a nationwide teen talk show. Many of the group members are excited about having the opportunity to socialize with other students outside of the middle school setting.

In this practicum, only one of the three outcomes was met. Middle school parents: (a) gained education on the negative impact domestic violence has on the academic performance of their children, (b) gained strategies on ways to cope with stress and conflict in a nonviolent way, and (c) received information on community services that help alleviate stress.

Recommendations

The following recommendations can be used in the writer's workplace.

1. Middle school students who are referred to administrators and counselors should be required to participate in a group similar to Project REAL.

2. Families that have a history of violence need to be referred to agencies that provide direct services to victims of domestic violence.

3. School personnel, particularly counselors, need to obtain training as to what to steps should be taken when helping families who engage in violence.

4. Middle school students who continue to experience poor academic performance should be referred to the child-study team for follow-up.

5. Funding should be made available to continue Project REAL.

There are several recommendations that could benefit other school settings. They include:

1. Children should be taught nonviolent skills as early as kindergarten in schools.

2. There needs to be a closer relationship between schools and child protective services (CPS) to help better assist children who are exposed to domestic violence. There is not a consistent policy nationwide that states when CPS can intervene in these cases.

3. Victims of domestic violence could benefit from mentor services or any other program that matches students with positive role models.

4. Parents should become more involved in their children's education, especially in the area of homework.

5. Parent education to address stress and violence in the home should be made available in all schools.

The writer plans to offer Project REAL to other middle school students in the spring of 1994. I plan to make several changes in implementing the group in the future.

1. The study skills session will be offered early in the group and build on skills during the 12 weeks.

2. The writer will plan to first meet with parents individually rather than in a group setting to present information on domestic violence prevention and stress management. Many of these parents need individual help first to address the denial of the problem before moving into a group setting.

3. Project REAL group members will be referred to the new homework hotline developed by school personnel for help with homework.

4. More time will be spent discussing study skills and what group members can do to improve their school performance.

5. Parents will be given more information on how they can encourage their children to complete their homework.

Dissemination

The practicum results will be disseminated to other mental health colleagues in several ways. A presentation will be made to a local Domestic Violence Coalition in April 1994. The state Coalition Against Domestic Violence is interested in hearing the results of Project REAL. The

writer served as a guest speaker on a panel at a statewide conference on domestic violence regarding programs for children in October 1993. The results of this practicum will be available for the next statewide conference. Positive feedback from the October 1983 presentation on the practicum was received by the writer from the organization.

The writer submitted a short article regarding Project REAL to the National Education Association and it is hoped that this material will be printed in their journal in the near future. Also, the article was forwarded to a staff member of the Journal of Virginia Education Association who has expressed an interest in printing the short article. Plans have been made to write and to submit proposals to present the practicum at the annual conferences of the Association of American University for Women, The Association of Curriculum and Supervision, and The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

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APPENDIX A

Domestic Violence Seminar Survey

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION SEMINAR

SURVEY

October 16, 1992

Program Title: Envisioning Safe Relationships for Individuals, Couples, Families and Children

1. This Program was
   _____ of little value.
   _____ informative.
   _____ very informative.

2. Quality of Content: ____poor ____ fair ____ good____excellent

3. Quality of Presentation:___poor ____ fair ___good_____excellent

4. Do you feel that domestic violence is a problem for children in school. (Yes No). If yes, indicate any suggestions as to what services could be offered to children of violent homes.

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. What is your overall evaluation of this seminar?

   _____poor _____ fair _____ good _____ excellent

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APPENDIX B

PRETEST/POSTTEST

Appendix B

Domestic Violence Prevention

Pretest Posttest

Date_____
Age_____

1. The fights between members in my family are interfering with my doing a good job on my school work.

   True_____ False_____ Unsure_____

2. I earned a "D" or "F" in one or more subjects on my report card last grading period.

   True_____ False_____ Unsure_____

3. I had better grades on my report card before the fighting between members in the household began in my home.

   True_____ False_____ Unsure_____

4.* Violence occurs in very few marriages.

   True_____ False_____ Unsure_____

5.* Violence in relationships happens mostly to poor people and people of color.

   True_____ False_____ Unsure_____

6. I do not know how to cope with the fighting in my home.

   True_____ False_____ Unsure_____

7. The way to handle conflicts with others is to use physical force.

   True_____ False_____ Unsure_____

8. Parents need help with dealing with stress and conflicts.

   True_____ False_____ Unsure_____

9. Middle school students need counseling in school to help with cope with violence at home.

   True_____ False_____ Unsure_____

10. I am aware of ways to deal with stress in my home due to violence that occurs between members in my home.

   True_____ False_____ Unsure_____

*Items 4 and 5 taken directly from Levy, 1984.

Adapted from Levy (1984). Skills for violence-free relationships: Curriculum for young people ages 13-14. California: The Southern California Coalition on Battered Women.

APPENDIX C

POST INTERVIEW WITH PARENTS FORM

APPENDIX C
Post Interview with Parents

1. Physical violence between family or household members in the home can influence children's performance in a negative way.
   Yes_____ No_____ Unsure_____

2. Physical fights have decreased since I became aware of the effects they have on my child's school performance.
   Yes_____ No_____ Unsure_____

3. I have a list of services in the community I will call if I or anyone in my family needs help with a problem.
   Yes_____ No_____ Unsure_____

4. I am aware of ways to deal with stress without using physical force.

   Yes_____ No_____ Unsure_____

5. My child's grade or grades have improved after receiving group counseling.

   Yes_____ No_____ Unsure_____

APPENDIX D

PERMISSION TO USE REFERENCES

June 15, 1993

Southern California Coalition on Battered Women
P.O. Box 5036
Santa Monica, California 90405

Dear Coalition Members:

As advised by you in a telephone conversation regarding permission for me to use information from your Skills For Violence-Free Relationships Curriculum for Young People 13-18, (1984) by Barrie Levy, I am requesting to use information from the following pages of the guide. These pages are: 23, 27, 31, 32, 33, 44, 45, 46, 51, 61, 63, 64, 70, 82, 82, and 88. I would like to use the information from these pages in my Practicum I paper, a requirement for a doctorate degree in education at Nova University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Thank you in advance for faxing the response to this request. The FAX number is 703 658-5990 or mail to the address enclosed on the enclosed calling card. I will be eager to share the paper with you upon completion of this practicum.

Sincerely,

Deborah

Deborah Foreman, MSW

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
COALITION
ON BATTERED WOMEN
P.O. BOX 5036
SANTA MONICA, CA 90405

June 21, 1993

Deborah Foreman
Nova University
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Dear Ms. Foreman,

As we discussed earlier this month, you have permission to use information on pages 23, 27, 31, 32, 33, 44-46, 51, 61, 63, 64, 70, 82, and 88 from Skills for Violence-Free Relationships: Curriculum for Young People Ages 13-18 for the Southern California Coalition on Battered Women by Barrie Levy. Any reprint or reference of material from the curriculum must include the full title of the original source as stated above. Thank you for your commitment to educate the community on domestic violence. If the Southern California Coalition on Battered Women can be of assistance, please contact me at (213) 655-6098.

Sincerely,

Ann Kaminstein
Service Coordinator

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